Listing of the Claims

1. (currently amended) A method for managing transactions at a network storage device, comprising:

receiving [[a]] an incoming transaction at said network storage device; and

assigning a priority to said incoming transaction relative to other incoming transactions at said network storage device based at least in part on a usage policy.

2. (original) A method as in claim 1, further comprising receiving said usage policy at said network storage device, and wherein said network storage device is a NAS device.

3. (original) A method as in claim 1, further comprising:

reading meta data from said transaction; and

comparing said meta data to a number of rules defined in said usage policy, wherein assigning said priority to said transaction is based on at least part of said meta data satisfying at least one condition of said number of rules.

4. (original) A method as in claim 1, further comprising ordering said transaction among other transactions in a queue at said network storage device.

5. (currently amended) A method for managing transactions at a network storage device, comprising:

generating a usage policy for said network storage device; and

distributing said usage policy to said network storage device for prioritizing a plurality of incoming transactions received at said network storage device relative to one another.

6. (original) A method as in claim 5, further comprising identifying said network storage device on a network, and wherein said network storage device is a NAS device.

7. (previously presented) A method as in claim 5, wherein said usage policy comprises a number of rules, each including meta data and a corresponding priority.

8. (currently amended) An apparatus for managing a plurality of incoming transactions ~~received~~ at a network storage device, comprising:

computer readable storage medium at said network storage device;

a usage policy stored on said computer readable storage medium; and

computer readable program code residing in said computer readable storage medium, comprising program code for prioritizing said plurality of ~~received~~ incoming transactions relative to one another based on said usage policy.

9. (original) An apparatus as in claim 8, wherein said computer readable program code is a software agent, and wherein said network storage device is a NAS device.

10. (original) An apparatus as in claim 8, wherein said usage policy comprises a number of rules which define a number of priorities for a number of meta data, wherein said program code assigns one of said priorities to one of said transactions when said transaction satisfies at least one of said rules.

11. (previously presented) An apparatus as in claim 8, wherein said transactions are packetized signals comprising at least one data field and at least one meta data field, wherein said program code reads said at least one meta data field and orders said transactions among other transactions in a queue